Eating for Health: Addressing health inequality in Nottingham through improving food and nutrition

About the Project

This project seeks to co-produce a model of community healthcare for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire focused on improving diet, food and nutrition. Pervasive health inequalities exist across the city and county which disproportionately affect the way that chronic disease and ill health, related to food and nutrition, impact on different communities and groups.

The project builds on the previous Diet in Nottingham (DiNo) research which examined the wider determinants of health and barriers to healthier lifestyles that impact and influence the development of Type 2 diabetes and obesity across Nottingham City's diverse communities. This work found how intersecting factors at the individual, group, regional and national levels affecting people's diets, varied amongst different communities in Nottingham. It also identified the way in which multiple organisations, including leisure centres, schools and religious institutions, are involved in shaping the food choices of different groups.

This PhD project will deepen and extend the DiNo research, collecting data from a broader geographical area across Nottinghamshire and with a wider range of groups and communities. Findings from the research will help to understand the barriers to disease prevention, self-management, accessing support and care, including, but not limited to, race, culture, heritage, education, geographical area, age, and family dynamics. Further, the project will contribute to the co-production of community care services relating to food and nutrition, as well as the health conditions affected by these (i.e., obesity and Type 2 diabetes).

This project has been co-created and is supported by researchers from Nottingham Trent University (NTU), the University of Nottingham (UoN) and partners at NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board. The successful candidate for this project will be enrolled at the University of Nottingham.

Project Aims

The overall aims of the project are:

1. Understand the cultural/heritage context around food and nutrition in certain populations in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, in relation to obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and other long-term health conditions.
2. Understand how local and community infrastructure and resources can positively or negatively impact access and decision-making around food and nutrition in these populations, and how different populations are impacted differently by these.
3. Understand how to reach and engage with populations with higher health inequity, empower them to make positive, sustainable health-related decisions, and keep them engaged long-term in health care and support.
4. Understand the challenges and obstacles specific to underrepresented groups and those from populations with higher health inequity (e.g. culture, race, geography, education) that exist in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Supervisory Team

1. Lead Academic Supervisor: Prof Stephen Timmons(UoN)
2. Academic Co-Supervisor: Prof Sarah Earl (NTU)
3. Community Supervisor: Pamela Rumbell, (NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board)

Key Details

Host University:	University of Nottingham
School / department:	Nottingham University Business School
Start date:	01 April 2025
Financial offer:	Tuition fees covered in full (worth approx. £15k across full PhD programme). Monthly stipend based on £19,237 per annum, pro rata, tax free.

Key Details

Working hours	Full-time (minimum 37.5 hrs per week)
Working Style:	Primarily in-person at host university. Flexible working supported. Working pattern to be agreed between successful candidate and lead supervisor.

Competencies

Co(l)laboratory Core Competencies		
Category	Competency	Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)
Comprehension and evaluation	Strong understanding of the project and its subject matter.	A / I
	Analytical, researcher mindset with keen attention to detail.	A / I
	Communicate complex concepts with clarity and precision.	A / I
	Able to identify connections, patterns, gaps, and irregularities in information/data.	I
	Able to interpret data/information confidently with logic and empathy to derive meaning.	I
Social and emotional	Demonstrable experience of responding effectively changing contexts, information and demands.	A
	Ability to persevere in the face of challenges/failures and to remain constructive in developing solutions.	A
	Demonstrable passion for learning with clear drive and curiosity to undertake this specific research project.	A / I
	Willingness to immerse oneself in the research subject matter and make a contribute to new knowledge through a PhD.	A / I
	Strong desire to make a positive community impact through the research.	A / I
	Willingness to think deeply about complex concepts and engage with academic ideas and theory.	A / I

Competencies

Co(l)laboratory Core Competencies		
Category	**Competency**	**Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)**
Preparedness and potential for success	Experience of working, collaborating and communicating effectively with different stakeholders.	A
	High level of self-motivation and ability to work with minimal guidance.	A / I
	Strong organisational and time-management skills with the ability to balance and prioritise multiple tasks.	A / I
	Ability to identify potential challenges and complexities and thoughtfully consider possible solutions.	A / I
	Able to identify the technical, personal, or professional skills required for a task and take action to develop these.	A / I
Community Context	Genuine desire to undertake community-engaged research over more traditional approaches to research.	A
	Understand the impact of and need for the inclusion of diverse experiences and points of view in research.	A / I
	Appreciation/understanding of the importance of community insight and experience in the generation of new knowledge.	A / I
	Awareness/understanding of the broader societal context related to the subject matter of the project.	A / I

Project Specific Competencies			
Essential	**Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)**	**Desirable**	**Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)**
Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to engage with individuals and groups from various backgrounds and in different contexts.	A / I	Understanding and experience conducting or working with research/data.	A / I
Relevant background experience in healthcare, communities/charities, or similar field.	A / I	Experience applying research findings/data to practice	A / I

Competencies

Project Specific Competencies			
Essential	**Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)**	**Desirable**	**Assessed: Application (A), Interview (I)**
Ability to work with vulnerable individuals with compassion and empathy.	A / I		

References for Further Reading

- The Marmot Review, 2010. https://www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review-strategic-review-of-health-inequalities-in-england-post-2010.

- The Fuller Stocktake Report, 2022. https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/next-steps-for-integrating-primary-care-fuller-stocktake-report/.

- Health Profile for England: 2018, Public Health England. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-profile-for-england-2018/chapter-6-wider-determinants-of-health

- What builds good health? The Health Foundation; 2024 (https://doi.org/10.37829/HF-2024-HL02).

- Health Foundation "Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On", (2020), London: Health Foundation and UCL Institute of Health

- Jyoti, D.F., Frongillo, E.A. and Jones, S.J., "Food insecurity affects school children's academic performance, weight gain, and social skills", J Nutr, (2005), Vol. 135, No. 12 pp. 2831-2839. 16317128 doi: 10.1093/jn/135.12.2831.

- Lent, M.D., Petrovic, L.E. and Swanson, J.A., et al. "Maternal mental health and the persistence of food insecurity in poor rural families", J Health Care Poor Underserved, (2009), Vol. 20, No. 3 pp. 645-661. 19648695 doi: 10.1353/hpu.0.0182.

- Martin, K. and Ferris, A.M., "Food insecurity and gender are risk factors for obesity", J Nutr Educ Behav, (2007), Vol. 39, No. 1 pp. 31-36. 17276325 doi: 10.1016/j.jneb.2006.08.021.

- Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2023) Healthy eating: applying All Our Health. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-eating-applying-all-our-health/healthy-eating-applying-all-our-health#understanding-local-needs

- Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A. and McLaren, L., et al. "Chronic physical and mental health conditions among adults may increase vulnerability to household food insecurity", J Nutr, (2013), Vol. 143, No. 11 pp. 1785-93. 23986364 doi: 10.3945/jn.113.178483.